

Beat: News

A Province In Mourning

After Mass Shooting In Nova Scotia

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USPA NEWS - After a week, Nova Scotia is still in a state of shock after a horrific mass shooting which left 22 innocent people dead and only ending with the RCMP shooting and killing the suspect. The mass shooting, which is thought to be the largest in Canadian history, was carried out by a suspect driving a replica Royal Canadian Mounted Police cruiser, wearing an RCMP uniform and armed with several unregistered firearms. The deadly shooting spree started in Portapique, N.S. and spanned throughout several counties, leaving a trail of fatalities, burned-out vehicles, houses burned to the ground, and 16 crime scenes over a 12 hour period.

Over the last number of days, as Nova Scotians continued to grieve, the RCMP began to release more information about this terrible event including the names of the 22 people that lost their lives. Among those that lost their lives were, an RCMP constable, a teacher, two nurses, neighbors of the shooter, a retired firefighter, and two correctional officers killed in their home. Each one was someone's son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, or friend. Tributes have come in from people throughout Nova Scotia, across Canada, and around the world. Families of those that lost loved ones have said that they do not want the deaths to define their loved one, but rather celebrate the life and contributions of each one.

Their names are as follows: Constable Heidi Stevenson, Lisa McCully, Heather O'Brien, Kristen Beaton, Jolene Oliver, Emily Tuck, Aaron Tuck, Sean McLeod, Alanna Jenkins, Jamie Blair, Greg Blair, Gina Goulet, Tom Bagley, Joey Webber, Corrie Ellison, Lillian Hyslop, Joy Bond, Peter Bond, Dawn Gulenchyn, Frank Gulenchyn, John Zahl and Elizabeth Joanne Thomas.

Even though these names may not be familiar to most, these people were loved dearly by their family, cherished by friends, and were valued members of their small-town Nova Scotia communities which make up the fabric of this close-knit province.

On March 22, Nova Scotia declared a provincial state of emergency to help contain the spread of COVID-19. One of the measures under the Public Health Act is that social gatherings of more than five people are prohibited. Premier Stephen McNeil and the Chief Medical officer for the province, Dr. Robert Strang both acknowledged that funerals or celebration of life ceremonies with more than 5 people in attendance will not be permitted even through these tragic events. Both encouraged Nova Scotians to find other ways to mourn and celebrate the lives of their loved ones, such as using social media technology. The Premier said that he realizes what a hard thing that he is asking, but said that larger physical gatherings will be able to be held after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

On Friday April 24th a virtual vigil was held which included music from Nova Scotia artists and prerecorded messages from political, spiritual, and community leaders. The vigil, was called Nova Scotia Remembers, aired on several Canadian television networks and streamed online. There were many tributes, messages of condolences, and heartfelt expressions of music.

World-famous fiddler Nathalie MacMaster provided one of the many touching moments when she played a virtual violin duet with Emily Tuck, the youngest of the 22 people that lost their lives last weekend.

There have also been reports of virtual funeral services being held online in order to allow for many to witness while respecting the public health orders.

Even with the current crisis associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, Nova Scotians are still stepping up and displaying many extraordinary acts of kindness towards all those who have suffered the loss of loved ones during the tragic events of last weekend. There is no question that the mass shooting and the COVID-19 pandemic has changed life in Nova Scotia forever. However, make no mistake, Nova Scotians are known for their strength and kindness, and together will defeat these tragedies and come out stronger than ever. By every Nova Scotian being strong for those who are suffering great loss, it is the hope that as a community they can help honor the people that have lost their lives and help bring comfort to those who remain.

Please see the following is the link to the virtual vigil that was held on Friday, April 24th.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IURse2qDuUU>

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-16900/a-province-in-mourning.html>

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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